

'Going back not in my mind'

CRICINFO, undated

Steve Harrison has said the decision each player will have to make about whether to return to India will be among "the most important of their lives" but insisted now was not the time to make rash judgements.

Speaking to the Mail on Sunday, he said: "I'm sorry, but whatever is being asked of us in the next few days, at the moment, the idea of being asked to go back out there is the last thing on my mind. This is beyond cricket. This is beyond anything. It's all very well for people back home to say we should carry on with the tour, but none of what has happened has anything to do with cricket."

"I don't know what sort of things they have been broadcasting back home, but we were sitting watching the live pictures on the local TV channels here and they were just shocking, terrifying."

"The corridor down which people were dragging the dead was a corridor I had been walking down 10 days ago. An area was on fire next to the gym we had been training in 10 days ago. The restaurants we had eaten in 10 days ago were under attack, with people barricading themselves inside their terror."

"And I suddenly thought of the room I had stayed in 10 days ago: I visualised the layout, the bed, the window, the TV, the bathroom, the wardrobe... and I thought of the word poor, trying to work out where to hide to try to stay alive."

"How anyone can say that we should be carrying on with the tour in the circumstances is beyond me. I can't say now that I will definitely not come back or that I definitely will."

"If the board say they want us to go back the players have about 72 hours to come to the most important decision of their lives. All I hope is that nobody thinks we will take it lightly."

India calls

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Mumbai to Chennai, but retained Vadodara as the venue for a three-day practice match from December 5 and the first Test in Ahmedabad from December 11.

Dinajpur last

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paceman Mokammel Ali, who tore through the Dinajpur batting order taking five wickets for 18 runs. Bapji Das also added a priceless unbeaten 19 off 60 deliveries. Mokammel was later adjudged the man-of-the-match.

Earlier, Minhaz and Atif Chowdhury took three wickets each while Sayem Hossain had two as the Sylhet district side were shot out for a small total.

Dinajpur take on Rangpur in the second semifinal tomorrow after today's first semifinal between Barisal and Khulna.

SL whitewash

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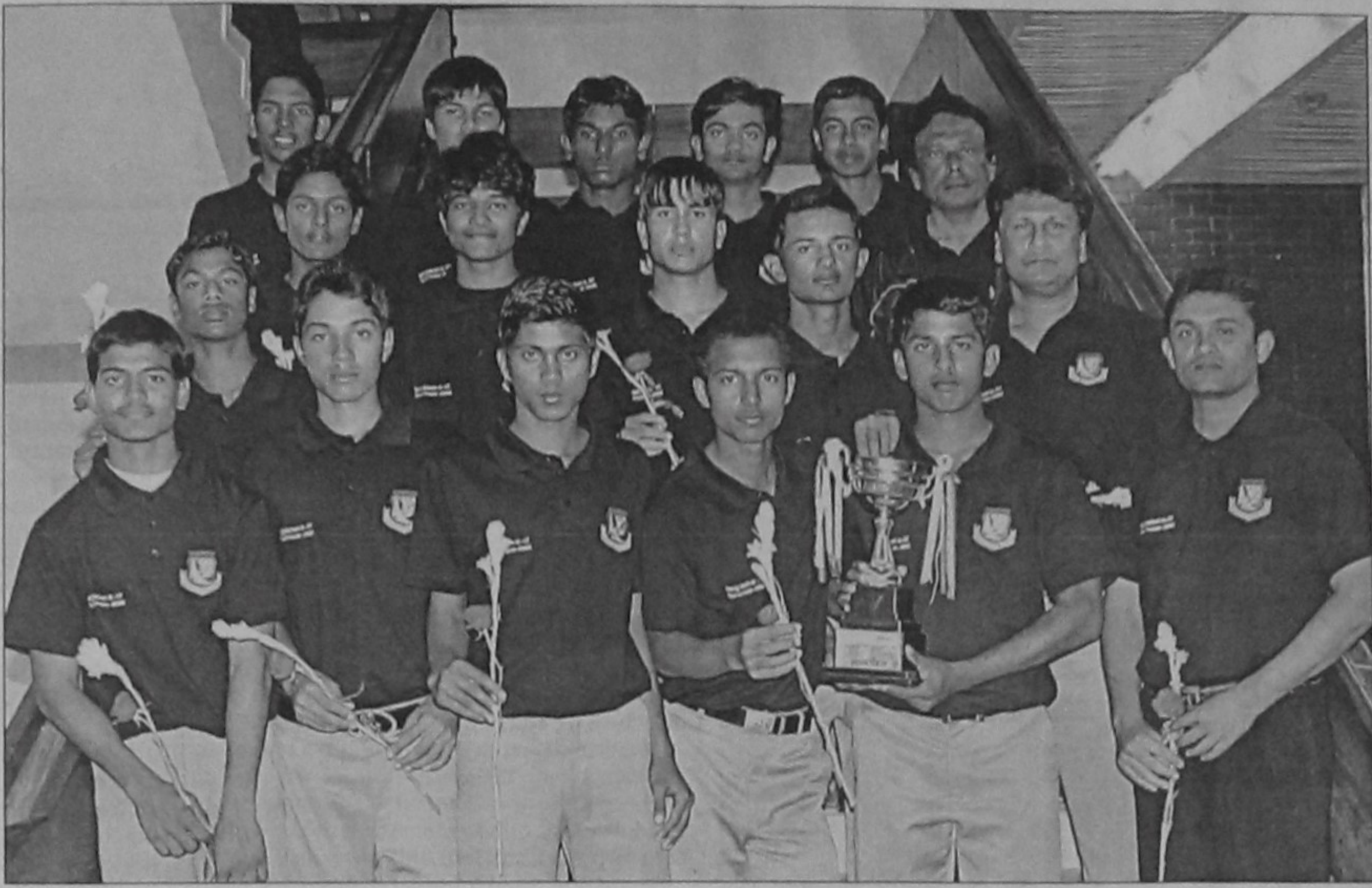
Kapugedera c Matsikenyeri b Mupariwa 4
Kandamby run out 40
Mubarak c Matsikenyeri b Dabengwa 16
Mathews c Masakadza b Rainsford 31
Kulasekara b Price 1
Muralidaran run out 5
Mendis not out 2
Fernando b Rainsford 0
Extras: (b-6, lb-2, w-11) 19
Total: (All out in 48.5 overs) 152
Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-25, 3-27, 4-40, 5-49, 6-58, 7-130, 8-147, 9-150, 10-152.

Bowler O M R W
Rainsford 8.5 3 22 3
Mupariwa 7 1 17 2
Chigumbura 2 0 18 0
Utseya 10 2 15 0
Matsikenyeri 10 0 29 1
Price 7 0 28 1
Dabengwa 4 0 15 1

ZIMBABWE
Masakadza c Mendis b Fernando 7
Sibanda lbw b Muralidaran 15
Taiab lbw b Fernando 4
Chibhabha lbw b Muralidaran 1
Matsikenyeri lbw b Muralidaran 4
Chigumbura b Muralidaran 5
Dabengwa b Kulasekara 39
Utseya lbw b Kulasekara 31
Price lbw b Muralidaran 3
Mupariwa c Mendis b Kulasekara 0
Rainsford not out 0
Extras: (lb-4, w-18, nb-2) 24
Total: (All out in 44 overs) 133
Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-25, 3-27, 4-40, 5-49, 6-58, 7-130, 8-133, 9-133, 10-133

Bowler O M R W
Fernando 9 0 33 2
Kulasekara 9 2 14 3
Muralidaran 10 2 29 5
Mendis 9 0 23 0
Mubarak 4 0 14 0
Mathews 2 0 13 0
Kandamby 1 0 3 0

Result: Sri Lanka won by 19 runs and clinched the five-match series 5-0.
Man-of-the-match: Muttiah Muralidaran.
Man-of-the-series: Ajantha Mendis.
Umpires: KC Barbour and RB Tiffin



Bangladesh Cricket Board under-17 cricket team members pose for photographs upon their return from Nepal at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

Dropped catches costly

CRICINFO, Adelaide

Two dropped catches significantly increased New Zealand's deficit in Adelaide, where they face an enormous challenge to save the Test with two days remaining. On a day when Ross Taylor snared a one-handed blinder at first slip to remove Brett Lee, New Zealand could only wonder how Daniel Flynn and Daniel Vettori put down sitters earlier in the afternoon.

"Ross Taylor's was a beauty wasn't it," the fast bowler Iain O'Brien said with a smile when asked about the team's catching. "They hurt when a guy goes on to bat as positively as he did for as long as he did. You take 70 or 80 runs off that, and it's a different scoreboard."

O'Brien was referring to Flynn's simple opportunity that was grassed at mid-on when Brad Haddin was on 72. The batsman went on to make 169 and Australia's lead of 230 at stumps on the third day

could have been much more manageable. Vettori's miss was less costly -- he could not hang on to a return chance off Lee -- but helped cap off a disappointing day for New Zealand.

Vettori was understandably exhausted after sending down 59.4 overs for the innings, including 30 on the trot on the third day, and O'Brien said it was hard on the captain to expect so much from him. "We came from a Test match a month ago in Chittagong where he basically won the whole match for us," O'Brien said.

"He batted twice and scored 50-plus both innings and bowled a lot of overs and took a lot of wickets. Unfortunately at the moment that's his role. It's tough when bowling from one end is left to one guy and he does it so well, so it's kind of hard to let someone have a go as well."

O'Brien, who ended with the best figures for New Zealand, with 3 for 111, and with series figures of seven wickets at 30.42, is happy with his own form. He was remarkably chirpy after such a tough

day in the field but he has thrived on the challenge of playing the world's No. 1 team.

He sent down a string of bouncers to Lee before getting him out -- knowing fully well the fire will come back when he bats -- and spoke candidly of his day-to-day chat with Ricky Ponting. O'Brien had Ponting caught at midwicket for 79 and words were exchanged between the pair, but O'Brien said it was "just a bit of on-field humour".

"(What I said) was along the lines of you've missed out there," O'Brien said. "He didn't quite hear me, asked what I'd said, I told him and then he got a bit fiery and a couple of the other boys got a bit fiery and there's nothing in it."

The Australians will have the last laugh if they can wrap up the match on the fourth day after posting 535 -- a score that was a batting lesson for New Zealand. "That's the kind of total we should have got first up," O'Brien said. "We're way behind now, but it's a hell of a deck. We've got to bat a long time now to come out of this match."

KP hasn't slept since Nov 26

AFP, London

England skipper Kevin Pietersen, whose team are expected to decide whether or not to return to India by Monday, has admitted he hasn't slept since the Mumbai terror attacks.

Pietersen's men are due to play India in a two-Test series in December, but those matches are in doubt in the wake of the attacks in India's financial capital which left 195 people dead.

The 28-year-old Pietersen said he is still shaking after learning of the attacks and when he discovered English tourists were being targeted it sent a shiver down his spine.

Writing in Sunday's News of the World, Pietersen said: "I'm still shaking from the terrorist atrocities in Mumbai. Every time I see the TV footage of the carnage in the Indian city, I realise how close we were to death."

"I haven't slept thinking about the three-day rampage and siege."

"We were 800 miles from the attack, but suddenly we felt very vulnerable, especially as we had stayed at the targeted Taj Mahal Hotel just two weeks ago."

Pietersen said he feared the England team -- and their captain -- would be a target.

"It makes my blood run cold," he added.

But the England skipper said if the go-ahead was given by security experts to return for the Test series, he would return.

The second Test has already been moved from Mumbai to Chennai in a bid to calm fears. The first Test is scheduled to start on December 11 in Ahmedabad.

The England and Cricket Board's managing director Hugh Morris said on Saturday that no player would be forced to return to India for the final two Tests -- even if security reports show that it is safe to do so.

Barisal

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would look to get back into the groove.

POINTS TABLE					
Team	M	W	L	D	Pts
Barisal	7	4	0	3	81
Rajshahi	7	4	1	2	72
Dhaka	7	2	1	4	65
Chittagong	7	1	2	4	52
Khulna	7	1	3	3	46
Sylhet	7	0	5	2	38

Nasir spurs

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Hazem floated a long-range freekick for Ripon to put the ball further forward into the box and Bukola diverted its course towards the far post with an excellent volley for his sixth league goal.

Time was running out and just like their last-minute equaliser in a 2-2 draw against leaders Abahani six days earlier, Mohammedan snatched a 90th minute goal.

This time, Nasir put an intelligent overhead shot into the goal after Farashgan's substitute custodian Al Amin came out of his line to fist a long centre by Hazem just out of the penalty area. It was the third goal for the talented fullback who was playing as the right-side midfielder in absence of holding midfielder Arman Aziz, who has not appeared since playing full 90 minutes with a hamstring injury against Abahani.

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Aminul, Kamal, Rajani, Saikat, Ripon, Nasir, Sharif, Hazem, Faisal (Komol), Robin and Bukola.
FARASHGAN: Titu (Al Amin), Rajib, Ramjan, Emeka Lucky, Mamun, Rony, Rintu (Amirul), Kabir, Khokon (Faisal), Enamul and Johnson.
Referee: Azad Rahman

Sehwag Warne's choice

Cricket

PTI, Melbourne

Virender Sehwag was facing Pakistan's medium-fast bowler Abdul Razzaq, who was reverse-swinging the ball, and the way the Indian handled him is narrated in an interesting story in Australia's legendary spinner Shane Warne's just released book.

"Sehwag came up to (his batting mate) Jeremy Snape and said: 'We must lose this ball. I have a plan'. Next over he whacked the ball clean out of the ground, forcing umpires to pick another from the box that would obviously not reverse straight away. To which Sehwag said: 'We are alright for one hour. Smart I say.'"

Sehwag and Snape were batting for English county Leicestershire against Middlesex when Razzaq started reverse swinging the ball in the way that the Pakistani bowlers do, Warne wrote in his book Shane Warne's Century and attributed the "great story" to Snape, who told it to him during their Indian Premier League days.

The Australian believes Sehwag's style was unmatched in the world and worked for him more than any other batsman with the same approach.

"Sehwag is one of my favourite batsmen in world cricket and one of my favourite personalities. This is a guy I would pay to watch. Alright, he could get caught at third man to a big slash or a top edge in the first or second over, but he could just as easily bat for an hour in a way unmatched by anybody else in the world."

"You can take pot luck with Sehwag, although the fact that he averages more than 50 in Test cricket shows that his style pays off for him more often than it does for most other batsmen with the same approach," Warne wrote about the only triple-century India has produced.

Warne, who led young underdogs Rajasthan Royals to the title win in the inaugural IPL season, feels it was worth even having an out-of-form Sehwag in the team.

"If I was his captain, I would look to pump

him up at every opportunity, reminding him that he is a match winner... It is worth paying the price for the little mistakes for the times when he absolutely destroys the opposition and wins you a game," he said.

Despite some similarities, Warne felt it was unfair to compare Sehwag with Sachin Tendulkar, whom the Delhi batsman idolises.

"Comparisons with Sachin Tendulkar are unfair... Take him (Tendulkar) for what he is. Take Sehwag for what he is as well," he said and added "Their opening partnership in one-day cricket was usually worth the admission fee alone."

A self-proclaimed Tendulkar fan, Warne has now documented his feelings for the Indian, saying "Cricket has been fortunate to have a wonderful player and a first-rate ambassador, and to me he plays the game in right spirit..."

Warne also did not feel that being Tendulkar, it was imperative for the batting maestro to score in every innings.

"He doesn't score runs every innings, of course, but he hasn't suffered long troughs of poor form at any time in his career... the papers would praise him but also blame him sometimes if his innings did not win matches, as though he was responsible for the rest of the side -- what a joke that is."

The spin wizard also felt that Tendulkar should not be pestered to leave the game earlier than he wanted to, owing to factors like form and age.

"All good things come to an end, and we should make sure we really appreciate Tendulkar whilst he is around and playing well. We will all miss him when he is not around anymore!"

Warne also praised "hot-headed" off-spinner Harbhajan Singh as an "exceptional talent" but felt the Indian should have got stringent punishment than he got for abusing Andrew Symonds during the Sydney Test.

"He may not have a fan club in Australia after recent incidents with Andrew Symonds, but he is still the kind of exciting player spectators want to watch. I thought he handled the situation in Australia last year pretty badly and should have been punished more than he was," he said.

Rooney century sinks City

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United last season, simply could not get into the game and 32 million pounds star signing Robinho was nowhere to be seen as United tightened their grip.

But while the chances continued to be created, United just could not put them away and Dimitar Berbatov's glancing header from Rafael's cross brought a stunning save from Hart.

City finally created a scoring chance on 32 minutes when Javier Garrido's free-kick was met with a weak punch by Edwin van der Sar.

The ball dropped to Stephen Ireland on the edge of the penalty area, but the Irish midfielder's shot struck the

outside of the post.

Just as the game appeared to be drifting towards a 0-0 half-time scoreline, however, United finally profited from their good work when Rooney pounced to open the scoring.

The home side were unable to clear the danger inside their own penalty area and Michael Carrick's left-foot shot was only blocked by Hart. Hovering yards from the goal line, Rooney was never going to miss.

Although United continued to hold control in the second-half, City at least threatened their opponents' goal on a more regular basis and Benjani Mwaruware was unlucky not to equalise when he hit the sidenetting from a

tight angle on 56 minutes.

Spanish full-back Garrido then sent a free-kick narrowly wide of the United post ten minutes later as Mark Hughes's team attempted to claw themselves back into the game.

United looked lively on the counter-attack, though, and Rooney and Berbatov should have made it 2-0 when they broke forward only to see Richard Dunne, clear the danger.

But United were forced into a defensive end to the game following Ronaldo's dismissal for his second yellow card. The Portuguese forward protested, but it was a deliberate handball and referee Howard Webb had no option but to send him off.

City almost scrambled an equaliser in stoppage time when Dunne's shot was cleared off the line by Patrice Evra, although Rooney's long-range chip, well-stopped by Hart, could have put the seal on United's win.

'Safety can't be guaranteed'

CRICINFO, undated

If England do return to India to play the two Tests, it appears quite possible that some of the squad will choose to remain at home, leaving the selectors to make some hasty reshuffling. However, Michael Vaughan, who was in Bangalore with the England High Performance team at the time of the attacks in Mumbai, has warned that doing so might not be straightforward.

"All the lads will be desperate to play cricket for their country, but they will want to have their safety guaranteed and the trouble with this sort of attack is that safety cannot be guaranteed, even if they are given presidential security," Vaughan told the Sunday Telegraph.

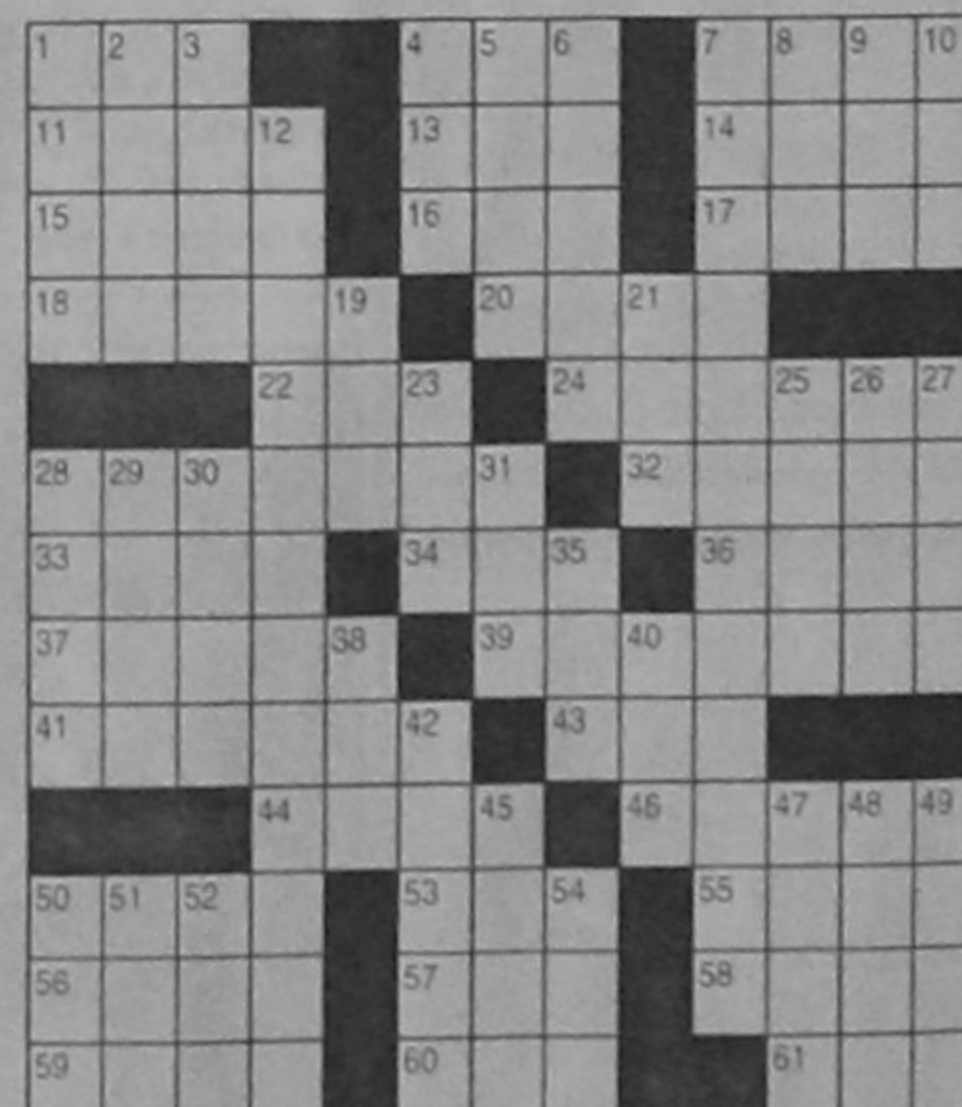
"If the Middlesex players had been involved... if they had checked into the Taj hotel 24 hours earlier... and if some of their guys had been held hostage, would this Test series be going ahead? Almost certainly not."



England captain Kevin Pietersen arrives at the Heathrow Airport on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		Across	59 Bosc or Bartlett	9 Rage
1 Lingerie	item	replacement	60 Old soap	10 Light brown
4 Will Ferrell Christmas movie	37 Bonfire	residue	61 Ball prop	12 Rose to address the group
7 Rate of walking	39 Other than	40 Robberies	1 Amorphous mass	19 Obtain
11 Craving	44 Bobcat	2 Hold the scepter	25 Gulf War missile	21 Twosome
13 Civil	46 Dark	3 "Yeah, right!"	26 Entice	23 Jewel
14 Old Italian money	50 Horseback	4 Lamb's	28 Jacket	25 Gulf War
15 Hedge-podge	53 Exist	5 Dalai	29 Call for silence	31 Massage
16 Ostrich's cousin	55 Film	6 Still-life subject, often	30 Rue the run	31 Massage
17 Prayer conclusion	56 Sandwich cookie	7 Corporate barrier of a sort	38 Pigs' digs	35 Solidity
18 Confuse	57 Author Fleming	8 Intend	40 Trinity member	38 Pigs' digs
20 Lends a hand	58 Mentor	8 Intend	42 Slow mover	40 Trinity member
22 St. Bernard's burden	59 Film	45 MRI	45 MRI	42 Slow mover
24 Rough struggle	60 Old soap	47 Toe woe	47 Toe woe	45 MRI
28 Gab	61 Ball prop	48 Employ	48 Employ	47 Toe woe
32 Happen	62 Ball prop	49 Authentic	49 Authentic	48 Employ
33 "That hurts!"	63 Ball prop	50 Burst	50 Burst	49 Authentic
34 Beer holder	64 Ball prop	51 Raw	51 Raw	50 Burst
36 14-	65 Ball prop	52 Meadow	52 Meadow	51 Raw
		54 Away from WSW	54 Away from WSW	52 Meadow



CRYPTOQUIP
Y A Q O Y R C Z A J B A A R E
F Q R S Y P X U Q Q S U R E P X A D F Y
Z R O M L D S E J S Y A Q Z L L E O
A R S C J S C L S M L F E Q Q F P I M Q
Cryptoquip: LACKING INSIDE
INFORMATION ABOUT A BARN DANCE, ONE
MIGHT ASK AROUND FOR THE HOEDOWN
LOWDOWN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals E